

L E T T E R S

1026

BETWEEN

The Rev. Dr. JAMES FORDYCE,

<

AND

The Rev. Mr. THOMAS TOLLER:

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF SOME

SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS.

LONDON PRINTED:

M.DCC.LXXV.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

AND

THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

AND



AN ACCOUNT OF THE

OF THE

SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS

LONDON: PRINTED BY

M.DCC.LXXV.



P R E F A C E.

**I**N the month of August last, the Meeting-house in Monkwell-street was shut up for several weeks, without any previous intimation to me of the design. The day on which it was again opened, I complained of this disrespectful treatment to some of the congregation who came into the vestry after morning service; but did not suggest the least personal reflection on Dr. Fordyce: for I did not then know that he was the contriver of the plan. Dr. Fordyce, however, having been told that I had complained, thought proper to resent it, and to write the first letter in the following correspondence, which gave rise to the succeeding.

Dr. Fordyce has since procured my expulsion from Monkwell-street; which, I believe, he had long in view, and had been long contriving to effect, in order to receive the whole of the subscription. This very extraordinary event, where the circumstances

*stances are unknown, must excite a suspicion that I am chargeable with something criminal. In justice therefore to my character, I could not but wish that the circumstances might be known as extensively as the event. Besides, such partial and false representations have been given of this transaction, that it at length appeared necessary to my friends and to myself, that a concise and faithful account of it should be drawn up and printed. Such an account I have drawn up ; which, with the letters that passed between Dr. Fordyce and me, I now submit to the opinion and judgment of the Reader. The ordinary mode of publication was declined, from an unwillingness to expose facts, which I have no pleasure in relating, any farther than was necessary to my own vindication.*

Thomas Toller.

Dr.

Dr. F O R D Y C E ' s

FIRST LETTER

To Mr. T O L L E R.

DEAR SIR,

**I**T was with much concern I heard, when last in town, that you had taken high offence at some late Steps of mine; and that, when I was not present to plead my own cause, you had complained of them, in a very warm manner, to some worthy Members of our Society, whom you knew I had long had the pleasure of numbering among my Friends, and whose friendship, you could not be ignorant, I was desirous to preserve.

My concern on this occasion was not lessened, when I was informed, that those complaints were made in the Vestry, immediately after you had been publicly addressing the God of Peace, in the Name of the Prince of Peace, and as the Mouth of the People.

Had you forborn your reproaches, till you had seen me, and heard my explanation or apology, would it not have been acting agreeable to an express Rule of that Religion which you have the honour to preach?

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I need not refer you to the place. You are no Stranger to your New Testament.

Of the world you have knowledge sufficient to be sensible that Appearances are not always Proofs; and that when circumstances are fairly stated, fully understood, and candidly considered, they often assume an aspect very different from that which they presented at first view.

My proposal to Mr. ——— of shutting up the Meeting three weeks, for the sake of such Repairs as several persons, who belong to it, had repeatedly wished, was an Expedient adopted in haste, through apparent necessity, and by no means weighed with that deliberation which the nature of the case may be judged to have required. In truth I never mentioned it, till half an hour after two of the clock the very Sabbath before I set out on my journey. The Idea itself had not occurred to me till the saturday immediately preceeding. Had it occurred soon enough to leave me leisure to canvass, and opportunity to communicate it in a proper manner, I had no temptation, and should have felt no desire, to decline either, but the very reverse.

Those who know me best have never suspected me of a pragmatistical, overbearing, or uncourteous temper. A retired and studious life free from bustle, and uninterrupted by schemes, has always been my choice. I have spoken handsomely of you, Sir, on a thousand occasions. On none did I ever say or do any thing to alienate from you a single Friend. Nor have

I ever



I ever shown an indifference about your health, or that of your family. Of the People that compose the Congregation in Monkwell street I have uniformly thought with a gratitude, affection, and zeal, which must always prevent the most distant intention of treating them with disregard or neglect. And should any of them be induced, through your influence, or on your account, to withdraw themselves from my ministry I can only say, that my kindest wishes, and warmest prayers for their welfare, will follow them.

I had been assured but a few days before the Sabbath abovenamed, by a Friend who had particular access to know, having been himself in quest of supplies, that as I had not then secured any, it would be utterly impossible to find them, every one of the few Ministers and Preachers who were at that season in London being preengaged. The state of Mrs. Fordyce's health, which was become truly alarming, and which every day grew more so, called for a journey without delay. Her distress so engrossed, and affected my mind, that I was very little capable of attention to other considerations. As I was engaged by invitation to wait on Mr. ——— the Lord's day before we set out, and had not time to consult you, or any other of our Friends, having been able to get to town only in the morning, I was naturally led to propose the Plan of Repairs to him, he having formerly conducted with propriety, and at small expence, something of the same kind in the courtyard. He very readily approved and consented, not having

the least apprehension, any more than myself, that the proceeding would give offence, nor the shadow of a Suspicion that I meant any thing arrogant or unkind. Had I done so, I should scarcely have applied to a man who lived on so intimate and friendly a footing with you. I believed myself the more safe from that circumstance.

When I expressed a desire that the Sounding Board might be brought farther down, it was what I had long and earnestly wished, from a persuasion, that though your voice did not require it, mine which did would be greatly aided by the alteration. In this persuasion I had been strongly confirmed Some time before, by the extraordinary advantage which I found from the very low Situation of the Sounding board in Mr. Brewer's Meeting at Stepney.

When I gave publick intimation of shutting up our's, I fully designed and hoped, God willing, to be at home against the first Lord's day in September, and should have been so with ease, had not Mrs. Fordyce been confined to bed several days upon the road, and so weakened by her illness as to be incapable of travelling with common expedition.

Lest my return at the time proposed should be prevented by any unforeseen accident, I engaged Mr. Davidson to supply my place in Such event. When I asked him to dispense the Sacrament, it was partly from a Supposition that You too might be from home, not doubting but you would probably embrace that opportunity of visiting your Friends in  
the

West, and partly from my not having time, during the few minutes that I saw Mr. Davidson, to attend to the consequences of seeming to exclude *You*. I said, *Seeming* to exclude *You*. For I solemnly protest, I had not the smallest intention or wish to treat you with *disrespect*. It was *inattention* only. I did not reflect, in my hurry, that it was your place to administer the Lord's Supper in my absence. If I had, it would have struck me at once as inconsistent with my own sentiments to think of employing another, in the case of your being present. But there are, if I mistake not, in the life of every man moments, in which the plainest maxims shall escape from his mind, however habitual or familiar to it at other times.

I am not indeed a very cautious character. I have never, I must confess, studied the forms of behaviour with much anxiety. But it is really far from my inclination to show a contempt for my fellow creatures, and still farther to put an affront upon any with whom I am more nearly connected. *You*, Sir, never can be an object of intentional rudeness among persons of the least decency.

In the very short time that I past with Mr. — on the Subject of shutting up the Meeting, I forgot to desire that he would send you early notice of it. But on recollecting the omission in the Evening, I employed Mr. Bailie whom I saw at Mr. Kennedy's, who is a subscriber to  
Monk-



Monkwell street, and a young man on whose care I could rely, to step the next day to Mr. ———'s house, and beg he would take the first opportunity to inform you, as I should be busied in preparing for my journey. Mr. Bailie called accordingly, but, not finding him at home then, called again the day after, and missing him again wrote himself to You the same day.

That any who attend the meeting only in the morning should have come there in vain the Lord's day following, and that the same inconvenience should have happened to any of the good People who frequent the Evening Lecture in the same place, I heartily regret. It was a consequence that did not present itself to my thoughts in due time. I hope their candour will excuse the inadvertency.

Inadvertency in some situations will be found with characters much more managed than mine. But of a propensity to offend mankind, or of an indifference about the just regard of good men, we ought not hastily to suspect any. May carriage to you, Sir, since we were thus connected, had not surely betrayed such dispositions in me. You had often at my request dispensed the Sacrament in my absence. I had not seldom desired you to dispense it, when I was present, and more than ordinarily fatigued with the preceeding Service from want of health, or some other cause. Had you come to the Vestry as usual on the afternoon of the First Sunday of this month,



month, Mr. Kennedy who knew me well enough to conclude, that my not asking You to administer that ordinance had been a meer oversight, mentioned to Mr. Davidson, upon meeting him there, (not having seen him before, and till then considering him as engaged) his wish, that if you should be present you might perform the duty in question; to which Mr. Davidson cordially agreed. I regret you was not present. It might have obviated part of the offence; and permit me to add, it would have been very becoming in a Disciple and a Minister of JESUS. Mr. Davidson had not offended. The Members of the Society had not offended. I was not there, with whose conduct you was so much displeased. The Ordinance itself had no connection with that conduct. It was the same divinely important and amiable Institution, as if the other had never happened. And I hope you did not think, that what had past implied a crime not to be forgiven. If you did, then ——— I cheerfully forgive *You*, pray the Almighty to bless you and your Family, and am with sincere esteem for the good qualities you possess,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate and humble Servant,

*Putney-beath,  
Sept. 13, 1774.*

James Fordyce.

P. S. I shall expect, Sir, upon the principle of common justice, that you will show this letter to those persons, whom your complaints may have impressed, or contributed to impress, to my disadvantage; as by hearing both sides, they will be enabled to form an equitable judgement.

Mr.

## Mr. TOLLER'S ANSWER

T O

## Dr. FORDYCE'S FIRST LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

THE favour of your's I received. The beginning of it, I presume, would have been omitted, had you been informed, that, when I spoke in the Vestry of the abrupt manner of shutting up the Meeting in Monkwell-street, your name was not at all mentioned, nor even hinted at on the occasion. — It would be kind of you, Sir, to suggest to the person who related the conversation, that the obligations of Truth are sacred, — I particularly observed, that I did not take upon me to say *who* was to be blamed; that it was the *fact* of which I complained. And, indeed, wherever the blame might fall, I must have been extremely abject to have suffered such a Transaction to pass unnoticed; a Transaction which carried on the face of it great incivility to me, and to the Morning Auditory; and which I do not imagine could find its parallel in any Dissenting Congregation, since Dissenting Congregations have existed. And the notice I have taken of it, I cannot conceive any impartial person will judge to be, in any degree, unbecoming the character I have the honour to bear as a Minister of the Gospel of Peace. I love Peace, and have

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followed the things that make for Peace. I look upon her with Veneration, and, of late especially, have offered many a Sacrifice upon her Altar.

If a few recent facts were impartially considered, I persuade myself there is no one but will allow that I have had sufficient cause of complaint.

I suppose you will recollect, that, about four months since, just before the administration of the Lord's Supper, you informed me, that some of our Friends had expressed their wishes, that you and I would distribute the elements in that ordinance; and you desired me, if I had no particular objection, to begin that Evening to join with you in that service. I readily consented: and after the service was concluded, when we were returned into the Vestry, you spoke with Approbation of the manner in which it had been conducted. The next time of administering, you told me that some of our Friends had signified, that they were disconcerted the last time, by both of us speaking at once; and therefore you proposed that we should, for the future, speak alternately upon those occasions, and address the Communicants at large, and desired me to do so that Evening. — I agreed to this proposal, and did as you requested. — To my very great surprize, the Saturday preceding the first Lord's day of next month, I received from you the following Letter.

“ As I find that the maner in which the Sacrament  
“ of the Lord's supper was administered in Monk-  
“ well Street the two last times, was, beside being  
“ never



“ never practised any where else, extremely disagree-  
 “ able, and disconcerting, to many of the Receivers ;  
 “ I have resolved to continue it no longer, but to  
 “ follow, God willing, a different method which, I  
 “ trust will be more acceptable and more edifying,  
 “ and which will not put you to the least trouble.”

Upon a review, Sir, of this Letter, can you think that I met with proper treatment for doing what I did at your special instance ? Can you think that the style of the letter is suited to the address of one Minister to another ? Can you imagine that I would have joined with you in the administration of the ordinance, if I had had any conception that I should have been thus speedily, authoritatively, and peremptorily dismissed ? What must the people think, when, after having joined with you in that service, I was at once precluded any future concern in it ? What could they think but that having been tried, I had been found incapable, or that I had done something to render any future concern in it improper ? It was with the Idea of its *continuance* that I joined with you in the mode of administration which you proposed. You proposed it to me not as what was to be *temporary*, but *constant* : and I the more readily complied, as our uniting in that service was expressive of an harmony honourable to us, and tending to promote the grand design of our labours.

Is there any impropriety in asking, *who* those *many* receivers are to whom the part I bore in the service was so *extremely* disagreeable, and disconcerting ? Or

*what* it was I said on the occasion that was so? Did I talk nonsense? Did I speak blasphemy? I must have erred exceedingly to justify your expressions. It is, however, no small satisfaction to me to find, that there were those of the Receivers (who are an honour to the Society, and whose esteem does a man real credit) so much pleased on the occasion, as to express themselves in terms of approbation, which it would not become me to repeat.

Your engaging Mr. Davidson to administer for you immediately after excluding me from any concern with you in the Service, as related above, tended to fix unfavourable impressions of me upon the Society, and upon the Public. — One would have thought, that you might as easily have seen, or sent to *me* as to Mr. Davidson; or, if not, that you might have engaged him conditionally, that neither you, nor I was in Town. — Mr. Kennedy was at Monkwell-street in the morning of the first Sabbath. He came into the Vestry after the service; but did not give the least hint that he apprehended your not asking me to administer was a mere oversight, and that he should intimate so much to Mr. Davidson. He had an opportunity of saying this, had he been so disposed. That he afterwards mentioned to Mr. Davidson his wish, that, if I was present, I might administer, was, I believe, in consequence of some of the Members, just before the afternoon Service began, honestly expressing their disapprobation of employing a Stranger.

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Do you really think, Sir, that I ought to have been present in the afternoon, and humbly to have waited till I had known whether Mr. Kennedy would be pleased to ask Mr. Davidson to permit me to administer; and whether Mr. Davidson would be pleased to grant the permission? Or do you think that my appearing there while Mr. Davidson was administering (which would have held up in a strong point of view the disrespectful treatment I had received) would have at all assisted the devotion of the Communicants? Or that the sensations which I could not but have felt in such a situation, would have been a suitable preparative for such a Solemnity. — Several worthy Members of seriousness, judgment, and temper, thought it right to express *their* disapprobation of the measure, by their absence: and I apprehend few would think they acted wrong. — A learned Countryman of your's hath shown, that Rousseau's charge upon Christianity, as tending to form slavish principles in the mind, is an injurious charge.

I received no information (except what I accidentally met with) of the Meeting's being shut up, 'till the Thursday Evening following the Lord's day on which you gave the notice. That Evening I received Mr. Bailey's letter. My not receiving earlier information prevented my embracing the opportunity of taking a Journey. — It seemed surprizing, that, (if you had formed the Resolution of shutting up the place only on the Saturday) you could not, in the beginning of August, by some means or other, have acquainted



acquainted me with the resolution, in which I was equally interested with yourself, time enough to have given notice of it in the Morning, as the morning service begins so late as a quarter of an hour before Eleven.

When, Sir, you consider these facts, and especially when you consider them in their connection, can you wonder that I thought myself disrespectfully treated? I did think myself very disrespectfully treated; many of the Society thought so too; and so did many not connected with it. — These facts being of public notoriety, naturally became (among the Dissenters) subjects of public conversation; and I should not speak truly, if I were to say, (so far as my information reaches) that the public conversation hath turned to your advantage.

After all, Sir, I have felt myself, and do feel myself, strongly disposed to stand with you on the best terms. I am a stranger to what you mean, when you speak about persons withdrawing themselves from your ministry through my influence. — I have been, and still am, ready to assist in any measure tending to the peace and union of the Society, and to its prosperity in whatever view. I have felt real concern when such steps have been taken as tend to form parties, and divisions among us.

I hope you and Mrs. Fordyce acquired an accession of health from your country Excursion. I most  
sincerely



sincerely wish you both all the happiness you can wish for yourselves.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friend and humble Servant,

Tho. Toller.

*Islington, Sept. 19, 1774.*

P. S. I have in part complied with your request in showing your Letter, and shall farther comply with it; though it is less necessary as I find a copy of it lies for inspection at Mr. Kennedy's. I should be glad, if, by whomsoever your Letter to me has been, or may be read, this Letter of mine may be read also.\*

\* A Copy of Dr. Fordyce's first Letter, was sent by him to Mr. Kennedy's, and shown to various Persons, before it was possible for Mr. Toller to answer it. A Copy of his second Letter was in Circulation at the Time Mr. Toller received it. — How far this Conduct was consistent with any conciliating Design, the impartial Reader will judge. — Dr. Fordyce's warmest friends have not attempted to vindicate his treatment of Mr. Toller. The plea, which hath been echoed all around, is the Concessions of his first letter. But though there are in that letter some *soft* expressions; yet there are a much greater number of *hard* censures, which should have found no place in it had it been intended to be conciliatory. The letter certainly required a reply; and Mr. Toller would have been wanting to his own character, if he had made no reply. — In his reply Mr. Toller denies the charges which it contains, states (without any reflecting language on Dr. Fordyce) the reasons he had for being displeased; and concludes with assuring the Doctor that, after all, he had been, and still was, strongly disposed to stand with him on the *best terms*. This reply was not what it hath been represented, a *rejection* of concessions. It was an avowal of a disposition to a *reconciliation*. And Dr. Fordyce had here a fair opportunity, if he had been inclined, to end the dispute. But the Doctor thought proper to renew the attack with greater warmth, as will appear in the succeeding letter.

Dr

Dr. F O R D Y C E ' s

SECOND LETTER

To Mr. T O L L E R.

REVEREND SIR,

**I** Received your reply to my letter, but must confess it disappointed me. I expected, from your character and breeding, that it would have been written with more fairness and candour. You profess, indeed, a fervent zeal for peace; and you even subscribe yourself, my affectionate friend; but I cannot help saying, that the spirit of your letter seems to be no very convincing proof of such dispositions.

I wrote to you, Sir, in a different temper. I narrated without evasion or disguise the whole transactions that had given you so much offence. I explained with truth every motive that had influenced them. I solemnly protested that I had not the smallest intention or wish to treat you with disrespect. I frankly acknowledged inattention, inadvertency, a want of deliberation, a want of care to weigh consequences in a matter which, but for the circumstances of difficulty and anxiety that hurried my thoughts, I should certainly have considered with  
more

more judgement, and conducted with more propriety. I signified my regret; and I expressed my esteem. All this, I hoped, would have been taken notice of by you with some good nature, and in your reply have been placed to my credit as making some kind impression in favour of the man of whom you had before you heard him complained so heavily. For I maintain, Sir, that to all intents and purposes, and according to every possible construction, you complained of *me*.

You plead, "that you did not take upon you to say, who was to be blamed, and that it was the fact of which you complained." But the fact could not be done by itself: you knew the blame must fall some where; and you knew it must fall on me, because you had been informed from indubitable authority, that the fact was done by me. You therefore, Sir, could not mean any other but me; and you could not but know, at the moment, that those to whom you spoke must necessarily and unavoidably understand you to refer to me. Nor could any one who heard you, and was acquainted with what had past, fail to believe your vehement charge of rudeness was intended to light on me. Does not your whole letter prove it with incontestable evidence? Your insisting in this case, that "you named no person," I will venture to pronounce a subterfuge unworthy of your profession, of your principles, and of your sense. I am sorry for it on your account. I thought much better of you, Sir, than once to suppose

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pose, that you was capable of descending to a quirk, that would be beneath a school boy. Would not any bystander of the least impartiality, or discernment, call it an Equivocation? And yet at the same instant you scruple not to insinuate, against another person, no less a crime than a violation of the sacred obligations of truth. Mr. Toller, this was not right, whoever was the person you had in your eye. If it was Mr. Kennedy nothing could be more wrong.

Mr. Kennedy, without hearing you pronounce my name, which he never said he did, concluded, however, for the reasons I have assigned, that your discourse pointed to me and to me only; nor could he in the nature of the thing conclude otherwise; and I appeal to your own mind whether his conclusion was not as obviously just, and as infallibly certain as if he heard you repeat my name ten times over. Mr. Kennedy, Sir, I speak from the intimate acquaintance of fourteen years, is a man of known, approved, and irreproachable integrity, to whom I may safely apply what you so truly say of some other worthy members of the Congregation in Monkwell-street, that he reflects honour on that Society. If you mean him, Sir, by your insinuation, I cannot much wonder, that you think uncandidly of me. He who questions the worth of one such character, will not, where pride, or passion, or prejudice, is consulted, hesitate long to question that of any other.

In your letter, Sir, you pass over in silence the rule of the Gospel which I thought, and still think, was  
by



by you disregarded or forgotten in the vestry. For strong as appearances might be deemed to be against me, that rule, I must ever be of opinion, required, on an occasion of such a serious nature, a manner of proceeding very different from what you pursued. To fancy, that you was exempted from it's obligation, by suppressing my name, where you must be sure my name was understood by others, as it was meant by you, were weak, trifling, and childish.

Reverend Sir, you have lived long enough to be convinced, that many actions have carried on their face incitements and dispositions the very reverse of those which were found on cool enquiry and proper information to have produced them. Did not you yourself on hearing what I had to offer in relation to the letter which you insert in your's declare that you was fully satisfied I had no intention by it to treat you disrespectfully; and that, as I positively assured you I had none, "you was sorry you had suspected it," for I aver, that these were your words. I then acknowledged with pleasure the kindness of communicating to myself in private your apprehensions, and giving me that opportunity of removing them by such an explanation. In consequence of this we parted, as I understood, without the smallest animosity on either side; I am sure without the very smallest on mine. But I cannot forbear to observe with equal surprise and concern, that you take up the same letter, on the same footing of dissatisfaction, as if no discussion had taken place between us, and no satisfaction had been expressed by you.

If the event, which happened soon after, tended in your idea to confirm your first suspicions respecting the style or purpose of that letter, you should still, I conceive, have delayed to draw any decisive inference from it, till you heard me on the other subject, since you must allow it was possible; that, as you had regretted the hastiness of your interpretation in the first instance, you might afterwards see cause to regret the rashness of your judgement in the second. A supposed deficiency of respect on my part, could not, I apprehend, supercede on your's the duty of complying with an express and important law of charity, enforced by no less an authority than that of your divine Master.

But setting aside the general obligations of religion and morality, I presume to say, that "my affectionate friend" should have waited a few days for my expected return, when he might hear my defence or confession, rather than pass sentence against me unheard, and indulge a strain of avowed displeasure, which he might be very certain would do me no good, and which he might naturally imagine would do me harm in the estimation of some common friends who were present. If you apprehended a tendency in my behaviour "to fix unfavourable impressions of you upon the society and upon the public;" did you apprehend none in your's to hurt me in the same way; and if you believed I had done you evil, was it your part as a Christian, and a Minister of Christianity to return it.

My

My employing Mr. Davidson to administer the Sacrament instead of you, seems indeed to have left a very deep impression on your mind. I again regret, that the situation of mine on Mrs. Fordyce's account, joined to a prevailing consciousness of right intentions, and let me add, to a defective knowledge of your disposition, which I did not suspect of such a proneness to mistake your friends, prevented the recollection which would have led to a different procedure.

You say, that "I might as easily have seen or sent to you as to Mr. Davidson; or if not, that I might have engaged him conditionally, that neither you nor I was in town." In the first place, Sir, I did not see Mr. Davidson till the evening after I gave the intimation; and as I had no opportunity, that evening, of applying to you, I was willing to make the matter sure in the event of my not being able to return before the first sabbath of September; which, however, I expected that I should. If I had not been hindered by Mrs. Fordyce's illness during a great part of the journey, it would have happened accordingly; and in that case, much of the offence would have been avoided. In the next place, you oblige me, not very kindly, to repeat what I had largely explained before, that the whole affair was the effect of that hurry and embarrassment into which I was thrown by the disagreeable circumstances I was then in, and especially by the afflicting apprehensions I was under, about the health, and indeed the life of the person in the world who was to me dearest.

I had



I had left her that very day in deep distress at Putney heath, from which I only got to town time enough to wait on Mr. ——— half an hour before I went to Monkwell-street. For such a Situation you have not been pleased to make any allowance.

In my last I expressed a wish, that you had come as usual to the Vestry, on the afternoon of the first Sunday in September. For there you would have found yourself treated, with every proper mark of respect. Mr. Kennedy had fixed it with the full approbation of Mr. Davidson; and he took this step, not as you believe “ in consequence of some of the “ members, just before the afternoon service began, “ honestly expressing their disapprobation of employ- “ ing a stranger;” for he did not speak to them on the subject, till the point was so settled merely from his own proper motion. The reason why he did not propose the same thing to you after the morning service, was partly because he had not then seen Mr. Davidson, and at that time considering him as engaged was unwilling to determine any thing without first mentioning the business to him; partly, because he saw you in such a state of irritation and disgust, as gave him no encouragement to continue the conversation. Observing you to be very angry about “ the “ abrupt manner of shutting up the Meeting in “ Monkwell-street,” he calmly interposed with his usual prudence, “ I could say something, Sir, on that “ Subject; but do not chuse to say it at second hand, “ and therefore refer you to Mr. ——— who will “ fully



“ fully explain it ;” upon which you turned to him with heat, and said, “ I was not directing my discourse particularly to you, Sir.”

“ You ask me, whether I “ really think that you ought to have been present in the afternoon, and “ humbly to have waited till you had known whether “ Mr. Kennedy would be pleased to ask Mr. Davidson to permit you to administer, and whether Mr. “ Davidson would be pleased to grant the Permission ?” Can you, Mr. Toller, ask this in earnest ? Can you seriously apprehend, that those gentlemen were capable of suffering you to remain in such suspense ? You may think yourself witty, and you may think yourself eloquent, on the occasion. But upon my word, Sir, I believe the world would call it spleen.

You proceed to ask, if “ I think your appearing “ there, while Mr. Davidson was administering “ (which would have held up in a strong point of “ view the disrespectful treatment you had received) “ would have at all assisted the devotion of the communicants ?” I answer, that probably many of the communicants knew nothing of the offence you had taken, and suspected nothing about the neglect you supposed, as many of your best friends partook of the ordinance ; and that those of the last who did, felt in all likelihood, just as became them at the table of their Saviour. I add, that the few who did not attend it would, from their own good principles and good affections, have joined with the rest, had they been

been told that you would join: for I am persuaded, that so amiable a deportment in you would have made the happiest impression upon them.

You even submit to enquire, "whether you had talked nonsense; whether you had spoken blasphemy," when you was employed some time before in addressing the Communicants in Monkwell-street. How could you think, Sir, of asking such questions? What had you ever heard me say, or seen me do, that should incline you to suspect, if you really suspected, I entertained such sentiments of you? Is there nothing in this manner of stating the matter, peevish or exceptionous? Had I been noted among my acquaintances for a jealous disposition, an imperious conduct, or a contemptuous demeanor, I could not have greatly wondered at your way of construing my late oversight. But surely my worst enemies will not, from my former life, impute to me so vile a character.

You ask me yet farther, if "I think the sensations you could not but have felt in such a situation would have been a suitable preparation for such a solemnity." I will answer you very honestly. I think the sensations which you *did* feel would not; but that there was no necessity why you should feel, and yet less why you should cherish or entertain, such sensations as to unfit you for commemorating the death and love of Him who suffered to obtain the forgiveness of sins, and to propagate peace among men. I likewise think that you should have embraced with thankfulness the opportunity, which Providence then

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presented of testifying and cultivating correspondent dispositions; and that liberality of thought, elevation of soul, and a noble strain of meekness, humility, and self-denial would, by precluding or allaying such painful impressions, have qualified you, in an eminent degree, for an ordinance so peculiarly calculated to confirm and improve those highest attainments of the man and of the christian. In that case, Sir, you would have manifested true dignity, and enjoyed, by the blessing of God, much more satisfaction, than you could possibly experience from your absence.

There doubtless are situations, in which every man is called upon to assert himself, by maintaining with firmness what he owes to his station and character. But I never imagined, that any privilege could be forfeited, or any dishonour incurred, by participating on any occasion with our fellow christians in the Lord's supper.

After the first time of our joint dispensation of that Sacrament I told you what was true that it had given great pleasure to some members whose minds were sufficiently centered to hear but one of the Speakers as he went round. I told you with equal truth after the second time, that many persons, I say, Sir, *many* persons found themselves exceedingly disconcerted and dissatisfied with the confusion of voices, when we both spoke at once in a small place to a small audience the first occasion; and not less, the next, by those alternate addresses which appeared to

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you



you and some others so agreeable. It was not, Sir, what you said that displeased. You said nothing improper or unbecoming. You said, what was much otherwise. It was the mode altogether, that was disrelished by a considerable number of the members. The first day I spoke at the same time with you, though I did not like the method after I began it. The second day I spoke after you. But to those persons, both the one circumstance and the other were extremely disagreeable. They thought it unusual: they believed it unexampled: they considered as unsuitable, irregular, and out of place: it divided their attention: it disturbed their devotion: it deprived them of their wonted consolation from that duty.

I know not your view in asking, who those persons were? I shall not gratify your curiosity. You do not appear to be in a proper temper, for receiving such information. If you doubt my veracity with regard to the fact, I despise the suspicion. If you wish to point your resentment against any individuals, I pity your unhappiness. And if you say, that I am now warm in my turn, you say true. Your letter has offended me highly and I think justly. The opinion I entertained of you, even after all your complaints in the vestry and elsewhere, was still such, as induced me to expect a very different one. That which I wrote to you deserved it, if I may trust the judgment of numbers who have seen both.

To return to our joint administration of the Lord's supper, I will own that when you began the first  
time

time to address the Communicants before I had said a word in going round with the bread, I was somewhat surprised, as were many others, not having looked for it, as I did not understand you was then to speak. For when you asked me in the vestry, "whether it would not be proper to say something in distributing the elements," I sincerely profess, I had not the most distant idea, that you meant we should both speak together. It certainly formed a very uncommon medley, on so solemn an occasion. Nor will I deny, that I was secretly hurt, when I reflected on my interrupting the attention of any, by speaking after you had begun. But having remarked your extraordinary readiness at that time, I desired you the next to take upon you singly the part of addressing the Communicants, while we carried round the elements. You consented, and you acquitted yourself well. You then sat down, and I finished the Service.

You ask, Sir, "What must the people think when after having joined with me in that service, you was at once precluded from all future concern in it? What could they think, but that having been tried you had been found incapable, or that you had done something to render any future concern in it improper? To these questions, which perhaps you thought unanswerable, in the agitation of disappointed importance, I reply, that the people in general would, from a favourable impression of us both, and that candid disposition which they have

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always

always shown, think nothing of the matter, but what was the real case, that such a mode of administration was found inconvenient, and therefore discontinued. Their self love being no way interested, they have too much common sense to suppose, that any new method which happens to be adopted for reasons that may appear satisfactory at the instant must of necessity be pursued, without regard to the more enlightened judgement, which may be formed concerning it after it has been tried. But the fact is, that I never did propose the mode in question, as what was to be continued; and when you affirm "I proposed it to you not as what was to be temporary but constant," I absolutely deny it, and say that you mistook me in this as in all the rest.

To make such a proposal would have been preposterous, even though many had not objected to our speaking whether jointly or alternately. The plan would have been without a precedent, as it was without a reason. There could be no reason why the pastor of the congregation should so far resign his place to the assistant preacher, while he himself was present, and judged to be not incapable of filling it. While this is the case, be assured, Sir, that he will not. To expect it, after fourteen years past in the performance of that service with some approbation, were neither very modest, nor very just. The honour, conferred on me by the society in Monkwell-street, I know how to value; and while I have the pleasure of being connected with such a society,  
I will



I will not without necessity surrender any part of that honour.

You talk of being, "speedily, peremptorily, and "authoritatively dismissed" by my letter; which I observe, by the way, you have thought fit to give in your's, without the Civilities of the beginning and the conclusion; the same civilities which I had habitually expressed towards you on former occasions, and from which there was nothing in my heart, on that, to incline me to depart. I there told you, with unsuspecting simplicity, the resolution I had formed, and gave my reasons for it in the general. I certainly did think I had a right to form that resolution, without consulting you. It was my affair, as the pastor of the congregation. I had considered it at leisure. I meant no affront, as I afterwards assured you; and I was, indeed, so ignorant of the state of your feelings, that I had no apprehension it would be taken as one. I had long been studying human nature, with some attention; but had not penetrated into the inside of your character far enough to discover, that there was probably a secret sore, which had been of pretty long continuance, and which seemed only to wait for a slight occasion of breaking forth.

My reasons for determining to alter the method of administration, I should certainly have expressed at greater length, had I been possessed of deeper insight. And I might have used more silken language. The language which I did use nakedly signified to my own mind it's sentiments and purpose at the instant

instant of writing, innocently suggested as they were by the considerations I have now explained. I meant, and I said, nothing uncivil. But the whole was misunderstood. Unhappily for some minds, they have a propensity to put the worst construction instead of the best; and he, who should labour with much solicitude to please your men of punctilio, would subject himself to a servitude alike abject and hopeless; he would give up his independence and his quiet together.

You bring in, by I know not what connexion, something about "flavish principles." For my share I detest them; and I wish to deprive no man of his freedom, as I resolve that no man shall rob me of mine. You, Sir, and I, are Britons and Protestants; and we will "stand fast in the liberty wherewith "Christ and God have made us free."

To resume once more an article which I have been compelled to mention so often. Before I last administered the sacrament, I communicated to Mr. Tate, and Mr. Randall, two of our Deacons and Friends, who have always had a sincere respect for you, Sir, my design of adopting a method different from what had been practised either of the two former times. On laying it before them they most readily expressed their approbation, without signifying the least suspicion of it's offending you or any person upon your account. They agreed to give their assistance by turns, without the shadow of an objection. They meant well, and they believed that I did.

When

When you say that "the transaction of shutting up the meeting in Monkwell-street, carried on the face of it great incivility to the Morning Auditory," you really amaze me." Did not you, know, Sir, that, if a few individuals are excepted, and I have been assured they are but few, the Morning Auditory constituted a very considerable part of the Congregation which attends in the afternoon, and to which the intimation was publicly made? Or do you wish to consider them, and to have them considered by others, as separate Societies? Or tell me, Sir, do you wish them to believe, that they have been at last slighted by their Minister and their Friend, who had been so long happy in their esteem and affection?

If some amongst them whom I truly respect, as I do the rest, should chance to hear suggestions of this sort, artfully thrown out, and frequently repeated, and if their alarm at a supposed intentional neglect of you should be assiduously kept up, till they were by degrees alienated from the object of your high displeasure, to whose influence, I beseech you, would such an event be naturally imputed?

You hint, Sir, at your having "felt real concern, when such steps have been taken as tended to form parties, and divisions among us." What steps do you mean? I really am ignorant of them. Do you reckon in their number the very handsome publick token of friendship which I lately received from the young Men, and young Women of the Society,



Society, and of which I knew nothing till the moment that it met my eyes in the desk? That any party or division had been formed by it, or was likely to be formed, I never heard the most remote suspicion. I was sorry indeed to be told, that you declined making use of the the Bible to which I refer, and which was ordered to be left in the Desk for you equally with me.

You inform me, that you have of late offered many a sacrifice on the altar of Peace. To what sacrifices you point, I do not know. You will not, I think, say that your letter to me is one of them.

You give me to understand, that beside the disapprobation of my conduct expressed by many of the Society, the public conversation upon that Subject among the Dissenters, has not "turned to my advantage." I will only reply, that both for one and the other I have all the regards which I ought to feel; that if I were conscious of having intended to do any thing wilfully or knowingly inconsistent with those regards, I should condemn myself as deeply as any of them could condemn me; and that I will always endeavour to behave in such a manner as shall convince them that whatever temporary errors may be committed by inadvertency, a weakness from which I never pretended to be free, I am in truth ambitious to merit their esteem by the tenor of a life becoming my profession. To such a life under Providence I will cheerfully trust for securing sooner or later the suffrage of the best judges. In the mean time,

time I have no sort of doubt, that when circumstances are fully known, and parties fairly heard, a large share of the displeasure you represent me to have incurred will fall to the ground, whatever diligence has been used, or may yet be used to raise or support it.

I will take the liberty to subjoin what you, Sir, seem not to know, that I have received from God a Spirit which, so long as I am enabled to preserve my integrity, is not easily to be intimidated or overborn; which would not willingly offend or designedly neglect any good man, not even the meanest; but which if pushed too far by any petulant man, be who he will, would only acquire new vigour, rise to superior fortitude, and look down with honest disdain upon such attempts, while it beheld their author with compassion and forgiveness.

When I look back on the enormous length of this letter, after the very long one I wrote before, I am struck with a kind of horror, and cannot but lament the necessity I conceived myself brought under by you of following a second time so irksome a subject through so many windings. I bless God I never was entangled in such a debate before. Here I will drop it, with a determination to resume it no more, unless the most judicious among my friends should advise the contrary, which I hope they will not do. I am sure I know how to employ my time with more satisfaction and advantage; and I make you welcome to whatever triumph you shall now

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think

think you have gained. But I doubt you have lost the opportunity of obtaining a better victory, I mean a victory over yourself, by accepting gracefully, and with good humour, the concessions I had made in my former letter, instead of fighting the ground all over again with a heat and obstinacy, that will not perhaps be found to add much to the reputation either of your judgement or of your temper. Then indeed you would have done honour to both, and this most undefireable dispute having been happily ended, the present trouble would have been saved to you as well as me.

Mrs. Fordyce, who is much better for her journey, joins with me in wishing you, Mrs. Toller, and the children health and happiness; and I am, with due respect,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

*Putney Heath,  
27 Sept. 1774.*

James Fordyce.

P. S. You would have received this letter much sooner, but for avocations which I could not prevent.



P. S. On reviewing your letter, I cannot discover your meaning in the following sentence: "It seemed surprising that (if you had formed the resolution of shutting up the place only on the Saturday) you could not in the beginning of august by some means or other have acquainted me with the resolution in which I was equally interested with yourself time enough to have given notice of it in the morning, as the morning service begins so late as a quarter of an hour before Eleven." The intimation, Sir, was given by me about the middle of august, the very day after I thought of the plan, and half an hour after I proposed it to Mr. ——— and but an hour and a half after I left Mrs. Fordyce ill in bed. But I am sick of the Subject.\*

\* Notice of shutting up the Meeting was given on the second, sabbath in August.—Mr. Toller meant, that as the days were long at that season of the year, Dr. Fordyce might easily have come, or have sent, to Town before eleven o'Clock in the morning.

## Mr. TOLLER'S ANSWER

T O

## Dr. FORDYCE'S SECOND LETTER.

REVEREND SIR,

**A**T length I have gone through your last favour. As I proceeded I could not but lament, out of concern for your reputation, that it was written in so ill a temper. You seem much hurt by the few plain facts your conduct compelled me to lay before you. 'Tis pity you should have brought yourself into a situation, in which the face of Truth should so grievously offend.

My religion does not allow me to return railing for railing ; nor does my disposition incline me to it. I feel myself superior to low, illiberal, invective. — The accepting such an auxiliary betrays a consciousness of a bad cause.

From the charge, Sir, with which you so briskly attacked me in your former letter, any one would have inferred that I had spoken of you in the most reproachful language, either directly mentioning your name, or hinting at you so plainly, as not easily  
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to be misunderstood, — But, in truth, I made use of no reproachful language : I did not at all mention your name : I did not even *hint* at you. I told you I did not. This you are pleased to term “ an unworthy subterfuge, a quirk, an equivocation.” — What I said was, that the shutting up the Meeting so suddenly, and without my knowledge, was treating me very disrespectfully. Mr. Kennedy answered, “ I am not to be blamed ; I could have no hand in “ it being at the time so many miles from home ; ” (so little did he *then* appear to apprehend that I pointed at you:) I replied “ I do not take upon me “ to say *who* is to be blamed, ’tis the *fact* of which “ I complain.” That this is a true representation of what passed (as to substance, if not as to the very words) I can produce the most authentic Testimony ; I mean the Testimony of a Gentleman, who, without a compliment, is not a whit behind your prudent friend in any amiable and worthy quality.

Now, would not a bystander be surprized, that you should so eagerly catch at what I said on that occasion as a reason for giving loose to your angry pen ? That you should represent me as complaining of you heavily ; as vehemently charging you with rudeness ; and reproaching you when you were not present to plead your own cause ? I cannot account for your conduct in this instance, unless you judged it politick to bring some charge against me to divert the attention from the repeated incivilities I had received.

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The language of your first letter I thought harsh and magisterial. I thought it bore the evident marks of a letter written purposely to offend. Under that idea I complained of it to you in the vestry after the evening service. You assured me, after some conversation on the subject, that you had no such intention, by any expressions in it: I was satisfied that you had not: your word preponderated in my mind the internal evidence of the letter. And as you assured me you had no such intention by the language you made use of, I was sorry I had apprehended you had; for I would not willingly entertain, for a moment, a false suspicion of any man. Dr. Hunter then coming in to preach the Lecture interrupted our conversation, and I went my way.

But, Sir, because the letter was not purposely expressed in disrespectful language, was not your sudden and peremptory dismissal of me from any future concern with you in the administration of the Lord's Supper, after I had engaged in it at your particular request, very disrespectful treatment? Did it not tend (as I suggested in my former letter) to make an unfavourable impression of me on the society and on the public? And did not your engaging Mr. Davidson, a few days after, to administer for you, tend to fix that impression? Was not this latter conduct greatly aggravated by the former? and ought I not to have mentioned them in their connection, when I was pointing out to you the ill usage I had met with?

You intimate that the people belonging to the Society would have taken no notice of these facts, if I had

had not. Sir, you are greatly mistaken: The people are not so unobservant of what passes as you may suppose, nor so totally indifferent to my character and comfort. Not a few of them (I speak from my own personal knowledge) not a few of them, are persons of friendly and generous feelings, who abhor all kinds of oppression, and, who are ready to stand up in support of the injured. — Enquiries were put to me, why I did not join with you in administering the Lord's supper as I had done? and why I did not administer when you were absent? Ought I to have made no reply to these enquiries? If I had not, might it not have been suspected, that there was a latent reason of which I was ashamed to speak? And if I did make a reply, could I make any other than the truth? What could I reply to the first, but that you had sent me a letter of prohibition? or to the last, but that you had not asked me to administer?

'Tis impossible, to dispute, with any appearance of argument, that the visible *tendency* of your conduct was to do me an injury; and that it was in *itself* very disrespectful. Admitting your plea, that you had no intention to offend; yet nothing can be plainer than that you had no intention *not* to offend: you must have been entirely indifferent (to say the least) how I might be affected by any of your measures, or you could not have acted towards me in the manner you have acted. And of this indifference (connected as we are) permit me to say, Sir, I had reason to complain; setting aside intentional incivility, which  
seemed

seemed the obvious language of that series of conduct which hath been related.

I apprehend few would consider your former letter as a conciliatory one. In that letter you groundlessly charge me with reproaching you when you were not present to plead your own cause; with acting inconsistent with my character as a Minister of the Gospel of Peace; with transgressing an express rule of Christianity, and slighting the most solemn of it's Institutions. Was this likely to conciliate? Was this making any reparation for past injuries? Was it not adding injury to injury?—And the language of your last letter was, if possible, less adapted to healing purposes. —“ Proud, passionate, petulant, “ peevish,” are epithets which have nothing “filken” in them. They are indeed unfit for “your men of “ punctilio.” They are unworthy the mouth or the pen of a Christian, or of a Gentleman, when speaking, or writing to another.

You absolutely deny that you proposed the second mode of administering the Lord's supper not as what was to be temporary but constant. Let me ask, Sir, did you propose it to me for that time *only*, or for any given time? Did you not propose that, for the future, we should speak alternately in distributing the elements, and that in their distribution we should each of us go one sacramental sabbath on one side of the Meeting, and the next on the other? I submit it to any unprejudiced person, whether this had the least appearance of a *temporary* measure? and whe-



whether I did not naturally apprehend that you meant it for a *continuance*? Had you given me the least intimation that you intended to try *experiments* in that solemnity, I most certainly should have begged to have been excused.

I reminded you in my last, that, when you came into the vestry after our joint administration, you spoke with approbation of the manner in which the service had been conducted. This is a fact which you have not, and which, I presume, you never will deny. What then must have been my astonishment when I read in your last letter the following passages? “The first day I spoke at the same time with you, though I did not like the method after I began it.” “I sincerely profess, I had not the most distant idea, that you meant we should both speak together. It certainly formed a very uncommon medley, on so solemn an occasion. Nor will I deny, that I was secretly hurt, when I reflected on my interrupting the attention of any, by speaking after you had begun.” How, Sir, will you reconcile these passages with the fact just mentioned? But — I feel compassion, and I forbear.

As an attempt to render a man cautious not to give unnecessary offence, “who is not of a cautious character,” and to render him attentive to the essentials of good breeding, “though he has not studied the forms of behaviour with much anxiety,”

"iety," is an act of real friendship, I still subscribe myself,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate Friend

and humble Servant,

Tho. Toller.

Islington, Oct. 5th, 1774.

P.S. Since I wrote the above I have seen Mr. ———, who told me that he had had some conversation with you, and mentioned the purport of it. When I am convinced that I have, in any respect, behaved improperly towards you, I shall be very ready to acknowledge it. But I am the injured man, and you cannot but know from whom concessions ought to come.

Dr.

Dr. F O R D Y C E's

## THIRD LETTER

To Mr. T O L L E R.

*Putney Heath, Oct. 8, 1774.*

REVEREND SIR,

**O**UT of gratitude for the compassion so tenderly displayed in your last letter, which came to hand yesterday, I will not trouble you with a particular answer to it. Your powers of sentiment, wit, and reasoning appear, indeed, so prodigious, that for me to pursue the Subject any farther, would doubtless be the grossest presumption. The attempt, alas, might for ever ruin that reputation, for which you so sincerely profess a concern. To misinterpret words to misconstrue facts, to repeat quibbles and evasions, to pass over in total silence remarks too just to be answered, and arguments too strong to be confuted, and to call the natural dictates of a becoming warmth and an honest displeasure, "railing, " and low illiberal invective, unworthy the mouth, " or the pen of a gentleman, or of a christian;" all this, Sir, demonstrates such astonishing ability,



that nothing is left for me but to bow my head with admiration and awe. Besides, were I after all this so daring as to continue the debate, your talents in replying would shine out with such encreasing splendour, and draw upon you such extraordinary applause, as might prove too dangerous a snare even to *your* modesty.

It is true, indeed, that many persons of candour, and piety, who have seen the preceeding letters, have very readily declared their opinion, that your last was full of gall, that mine neither shewed ill temper nor contained ill language, and that you ought to have accepted the concessions which I made in my first; nor have I met with one individual, who has signified a different opinion. I too was simple enough to think in the same manner. I even went so far, as to fancy, that your forgiving the man who had so freely confessed inadvertency, repeatedly expressed regret, and solemnly disavowed intentional neglect, would instead of diminishing have added to your dignity; and that he who is extremely apprehensive of being slighted or undervalued betrays a secret feeling of some deficiency in his claim to that respect, which he, who inwardly knows that he deserves it, is seldom very forward or impatient to challenge. In short, Sir, my edition of the Bible, which you have declined to use, confirmed me in the persuasion, that humility is the road to honour, and that to err is Human, but to forgive Divine.

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I am still troubled, when I reflect on the immoderate length of my last letter. But the real truth is, that I was willing once for all to discuss, as fully and minutely as possible, so disagreeable a question ; partly that I might not be obliged to return to it again ; and partly that I might give myself more chances of inducing you to accept my first concessions. Not having been able to accomplish this last point, so earnestly desired by me, and by many good people, I must now leave the whole to more time, more coolness, and the gradual operation of those sacred principles which you have long preached and recommended.

In the mean while I derive much satisfaction from the consciousness, that I have made, and been thought by a number of the best judges to make, every acknowledgment which became me ; and that where the intercourses of friendship are unhappily precluded, the sentiments of benevolence may still be entertained. I recollect too with pleasure that we may learn very useful lessons from our enemies, whether they openly avow their hostility, or try to conceal it under the “filken” title of our “affectionate friends.” I promise you, Sir, that I will for the future endeavour, even though I should be harrassed by the tenderest anxiety about the dearest concerns, to be more cautious when I have to do with any man of whose disposition “to think no evil, but to believe all things, and hope all things” I have not some tolerable evidence. And yet having been often deceived on the charitable side. I shall  
not

not be surpris'd if I am often deceived again. Neither shall I in that case be deeply mortified. I am sure it is both nobler and happier to fall into twenty generous mistakes, than to harbour one unjust suspicion. I remain with due respect, and much good will,

R. S.

Your most obedient Servant,

James Fordyce.

P. S. The Gentleman to whom you refer, when you mention Mr. Kennedy, I have ever loved and esteemed as heartily as you can do, and ever shall, though he should be persuaded to alter his opinion of me. The worthiest men may be misled in some of their opinions, about persons and things. But their leading principles will always be the same. I cannot leave off, till I have said, that I wished very much to see you at the Sacrament last Sunday. Your attendance would have manifested a truly christian spirit; and to partake that ordinance with you at this time would have given me particular pleasure

Mr.



## Mr. TOLLER'S ANSWER

T O

## Dr. FORDYCE'S THIRD LETTER.

REVEREND SIR,

"YOUR most judicious Friends," it seems, have advised you to write another Letter. I do not call it an answer, because it answers nothing. I am at a loss to know, how you could come at their advice in so short a time, or how you could learn the sentiments of *many* persons of candour, sense, and piety concerning my last; as you received it at Putney heath on Friday, about noon, and wrote your's there on Saturday. — Have you a standing Committee at Putney Heath, consisting of "the most judicious among your friends," and "of many persons of candour, sense, and piety?" — Had you acted by the advice of the truly judicious, candid, sensible, and pious, this interchange of letters would have been prevented.

To succeed in the style of Irony, at which you made some effort, a man must be at ease and in good  
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humour. You betrayed, under the show of pleafantry, internal pain. I would not willingly give you a moment's unnecessary uneafinefs. My nature is abhorrent to cruelty. What you have felt on this occafion cannot juftly be laid to my charge, but to your own.

By a multiplicity of words, and a variety of involved, long-winded fentences (not at all pertinent to the Subject) you have kept the points in queftion almoft entirely out of view. I will therefore ftate them, as fairly and briefly as I can, for the information of thofe who may give themfelves the trouble to read this correffpondence, which, I am informed, you continue to depofite for infpection at your prudent Friend's. — It were vain to hope that the plaineft truths fhould gain admittance into *your* mind, at leaft 'till the tumult of your paffions is fubfided.

When you opened the correffpondence, you charged me with reproaching you when you were abfent; with acting inconfiftent with my minifterial character; and with tranfgreffing an exprefs rule of the Gofpel. — Thefe charges were grounded on my faying, that fhutting up the meeting fo fuddenly, and without my knowledge, was treating me very difrefpectfully; though at the very time I exprefsly difavowed any intention to fix the blame of the meafure upon any one. — Thefe charges have been reiterated: and your argument is (if it may be called

an argument) that you did the fact, and therefore by complaining of the fact I reproached you. — Did you do it *officially*? — “ My edition of the “ Bible” does not teach me that it belongs to your office to order and direct the repairs of a place appropriated for Christian worship, or any other the mere temporalities of a Christian society. By taking upon you to direct in this business you stepped beyond the line of your duty. In every well regulated Christian society, proper persons are appointed for the management of it’s temporal concerns.—And as it was not done by you *officially*, so neither had you avowed to me or to the public that it was done by you. How then was my complaining of the fact reproaching of you? Why, “ I had been informed from “ indubitable authority that the fact was done by “ you.” This indeed is your assertion; but bare assertion will not now do for me: I call upon you, Sir, for the proof. — However, to give your argument (such as it is) it’s utmost extent, let it be admitted, for a moment, that I was persuaded in my own mind that the fact was done by you, or that I had received private information that it was; yet I will maintain, that, as it was not done by you *officially*, nor had been *avowed* by you to me, or to the public, I could not, with any propriety, in any notice I might take of it, have supposed, or have been understood to suppose, you to be it’s author. — Your charges against me are totally unsupported; nor would they ever have been thought of, had it not been to answer a particular purpose; and yet these

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charges



charges (which implied so much criminality) were urged upon me in that very letter, which you, and your prudent Friend, have represented as so mild, so conciliating, and so submissive; and a humble acquiescence in which “ would have added so much to “ the reputation of my judgment, and temper.” — And these charges are still urged.

You plead, in excuse for shutting up the Meeting so abruptly and without my knowledge, that “ you “ had not time to consult me or any other of our “ friends, having been able to get to town *only* in “ the *Morning*.” “ That you had left Mrs. Fordyce that very day in deep distress” (which you afterwards explain by being ill in bed) “ at Putney Heath, from which you *only* got to town time “ enough to wait on Mr. ——— half an hour before you went to Monkwell Street,” this is, half an hour before *three*. — If Mrs. Fordyce was so very ill, that you could not leave her so as to be in town time enough for morning worship, how was it that you were then pursuing a plan of setting out with her the next day or the day after, a journey of *four or five Hundred miles*? — Your other plea is, “ That “ Mrs. Fordyce’s distress so engrossed, and affected “ your mind that you were very little capable of attention to other considerations.” How came you then to be so considerate as to secure a supply in the event (as you express it) of your not returning by the first sabbath in September? which event, by your own account was not likely to happen. In this instance you were very attentive and provident. —

“ You

“ You applied to Mr. ——— who lived on so intimate, and friendly a footing with me (to inspect the repairs of the place) believing yourself the “ more safe from that circumstance” ——— How the *more safe*? Does not this imply a consciousness that the measure you were taking was disrespectful to me? And yet you would not concern yourself to obviate the disrespect, which you might easily have done, by coming or sending to Town in the morning. Such, Sir, are your excuses in your letter of boasted concessions! Not a single syllable is there said that you were sorry for the incivility, and that you hoped I would excuse it.—

Your desiring Mr. Davidson to administer the Lord's Supper (considering what had preceded) had very much the aspect of an intentional affront. This however you disavow, and attribute it partly to a forgetfulness of me, through inattention and hurry, and partly to a supposition that I too might be from home; which parts do not strike my ear as in perfect unison. But, waving this, why did you suppose I might be *from* home? Was it not more likely that I should be *at* home, as the place was to be opened on that day? Or, if you supposed it, why did you not engage Mr. Davidson conditionally? You have said, “ you were willing to “ make the matter sure in the event of your not “ being able to return before the first sabbath in “ September.” Would the matter have been less sure if my absence too had been a part of the condition? In truth, Sir, these pretexts are so frivolous,

lous, not to say, so contradictory, that had not you, and your prudent Friend, affected to lay such mighty stress upon them, I should entirely have passed them over as beneath the smallest notice.

Your requesting me to join with you in administering the Lord's supper (which you meant for a continuance if you meant any thing) and when I had complied, turning me off, in the manner you did, was both rude and unjust. — Your letter, on that occasion, was as grossly insulting as could be written; and that, with the others I have received, will remain a monument, while your name will remain, of the imperiousness of your temper, and of the illiberality of your pen.

When you alluded to those parts of Saint Paul's noble description of charity, "That it thinketh no evil, but believeth all things" (which surely do not oblige us to believe contrary to the clearest conviction, which were impossible) how was it that you forgot other excellent properties of it? Such as, "It vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly." — As an affectionate Friend, Sir, I recommend *these*, as well as its other excellencies, to your most serious consideration.

A Stranger would suppose, from reading your letters, that I had solicited to join with you in the distribution of the elements in the Lord's supper; whereas I again repeat, that it was at your own desire that I joined with you. And if, by this desire, you surrendered any part of your pastoral prerogatives,



tives, it was a voluntary surrender : and when you had surrendered it, you could not resume it, upon the principles of justice, and the grand social maxim of the Gospel, of doing as you would be done by, (which indeed you seem entirely to have forgotten in your treatment of me) without my consent : and that consent, if you had asked in a friendly way, you would have found no difficulty to obtain. You insist, that you had a right to form the resolution (of turning me off) without consulting me ; and that it was your affair as Pastor of the Congregation. But when you had asked me to join in that service, and I had consented, the affair you speak of was *my* affair as well as your's, and you had no right to form the resolution without consulting *me*.

You are mistaken, Sir, in saying that our joint administration was without a precedent. You should be sure of your facts before you assert so roundly. Such as are acquainted with the Dissenters know, that it hath been practised in other places, and in this City, where the Ministers were precisely in the same situation as we are.

You hold up the superiority of your office with an air of insult. Saint Paul's Epistles to Timothy, and Titus would teach you, that the Spirit you discover is not very congenial with your office. As the morning Preacher at Monkwell Street, I stand, Sir, on the same ground with you, I mean the Election of the people. I am not your dependant, and I never will. I am happy in the affection and esteem of the greater part of those of our Society who have  
been

been educated in Dissenting principles, or who have long professed them, and who are most regular, and constant in their attendance. I have wished, and endeavoured, by the serious preaching of evangelical Truth, to promote their spiritual edification and comfort, and I hope not wholly without success. I have perceived, with pleasure, the symptoms of an increasing regard.—I hope, Doctor, these symptoms have not offended you.

Though you had taken no notice of any other part of my last letter, you certainly should have made some reply to the last paragraph but one, as it called upon you for an explanation in a matter of importance. I have repeatedly said, and now say again, and am, if called upon, ready to aver in the most solemn manner, that, when you came into the vestry immediately after our first joint administration of the Lord's supper, you spoke with approbation of the manner in which it had been conducted. In one of your letters you have the following passages which I again transcribe. "The  
" first day, I spoke at the same time with you,  
" though I did not like the method after I began it."  
" I sincerely profess, I had not the most distant Idea  
" that you meant we should both speak together.  
" It certainly formed a very uncommon medley, on  
" so solemn an occasion. Nor will I deny, that I  
" was secretly hurt when I reflected on my interrupting the attention of any, by speaking after  
" you had begun." I again, Sir, call upon you to reconcile these passages with the above fact. I  
have

have a right, not only as these passages are in a letter addressed to me, but as a Member of the Church, to call upon you for an explanation.

As the affair of the Bible has no immediate connection with the matters between us, I should take no notice of it (having omitted several other things for the same reason) did it not seem your favourite topic. I remember well, that the Bible was in the vestry one morning when I came thither. I was there told, that you had long been looking out for such a Bible, and that you had bought it for a preaching Bible; and (as I have been informed) you used it as such. By and by this Bible disappeared, and a person went about to solicit subscriptions for it. Some who subscribed to it were about the age of fifty, who could not, without a strong figure, be ranked among the young. The Bible again appearing new bound, and with a pompous inscription upon it, you, from the pulpit, thanked the young men, and young women (if my information be true) for their very acceptable, unsolicited, generous present. — This, Sir, is a short history of the “very handsome  
“public token of friendship which you lately re-  
“ceived from the young Men and young Women  
“of the Society, and of which you knew nothing  
“till it met your eye in the Desk. I suppose, if you mean that you had never seen the Bible ’till then, you forgot that the Desk was not made when the Bible was first brought to the Meeting.—As it appeared from the inscription on the Bible, that it was your exclusive property, as you had not offered



me the use of it, and as there was another on which there was an inscription, signifying, that it belonged to Monkwell street Chapel, I told the Pew-opener to put *that* on the desk for my use, and not *your's*. And was there any impropriety in this? \* Had I been disposed to humble myself in the sense in which you appear to have humbled yourself, I make no question, but I too should have found it, in the sense in which you have found, the road to honour.

If the wholesome, though perhaps unpalatable, things I have written, operate upon you, as they ought to operate, you will hereafter acknowledge, what you now seem much averse to acknowledge, that

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate Friend

as well as humble Servant,

Tho. Toller.

Wilmington, Oct. 17, 1774.

\* After Dr. Fordyce had a few times used his Bible, it was sent to be new bound. While it was binding, a reading Desk was made, and another handsome Bible elegantly bound in Turkey, (besides that which was inscribed to Dr. Fordyce, and was his own Property) was bought and inscribed for the use of Monkwell-street Chapel. This was the Bible which Mr. Toller used, and which, from the Inscription, it appears it was *intended* he should use, and not Dr. Fordyce's, which he had no right to use, and the use of which was never offered him. If Mr. Toller had acted otherwise, he would have been guilty of a gross Impropriety; and yet this is the very Circumstance which hath been strangely perverted to hold him up to view as a sour, peevish Man, who had rather use an *old, tattered* Bible, than read out of the same elegant one with Dr. Fordyce.

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## ACCOUNT of some TRANSACTIONS

SUBSEQUENT TO THE

Preceding CORRESPONDENCE.

SEVERAL worthy persons of the Monkwell-street society, being uneasy at the misunderstanding which had arisen between Dr. Fordyce and me, as having an ill aspect in the eye of the world, and as likely to injure us in our ministerial character, went to Dr. Fordyce, and told him how much they wished that the misunderstanding between us might be removed; and, with this view, proposed our meeting, with a few friends, coolly to talk over what had been the grounds of our difference; mentioning at the same time, that I was ready to comply with the proposal. — But Dr. Fordyce refused to converse with me at all upon the subject; “ and when I was not  
 “ present to plead my own cause, complained of  
 “ me, in a very warm manner, to those worthy  
 “ members of our society, whom he knew I had  
 “ long had the pleasure of numbering among my  
 I “ friends

“ friends; and whose friendship, he could not be  
“ ignorant I was desirous to preserve.”\*

Soon after this, I was in company with an intimate acquaintance of Dr. Fordyce, who expressed his concern that ministers of the gospel, and especially ministers connected as we were, should not be upon good terms with one another. I told him of the above proposal, and authorized him to inform Dr. Fordyce, (whom he said he should see that evening) that I was still ready to assent to it. Or, if Dr. Fordyce had rather, that he should nominate two ministers of this city, and I would nominate two others, to whom our differences might be referred, that they might judge between us. — Both these proposals Dr. Fordyce absolutely rejected; adding, that he had formed *his* opinion, and that he would not give up *his* opinion to *any* man, or to any *number* of men.

Since our epistolary correspondence (which closed the 17th of October last) Dr. Fordyce and I have met at the house of a friend; and several times in the vestry, before we went to the Lord's Table; at which times Dr. Fordyce took me by the hand, with apparent friendliness, and enquired after my health, and that of my family; to which I always made a suitable return.

As this had been our situation for some months past; as we had not had, since the preceding correspondence, any altercation whatever, either by

\* Letter I. page 5.



word or letter; and as we never had any dispute about money matters, I could not but be surprized at a letter which was sent the third of February, by Mr. Kennedy to a friend of mine, in which, at the desire of Dr. Fordyce, he informs my friend, and desires him to inform me, "that Dr. Fordyce had  
" resolved, with the approbation of very many of his  
" friends, in future to rely upon such marks of re-  
" gard as the members and subscribers of the Monk-  
" well-street congregation may please to shew him  
" as their pastor and minister, separately and un-  
" connected with those they shall think proper to  
" give to me," and that some bank notes which he had inclosed were to pay me "for the half year  
" to Christmas 1774, from which time (he adds)  
" the joint subscriptions cease."

This proceeding of Dr. Fordyce was totally unprecedented, and incompatible with the first principles of protestant dissenters. The members and subscribers in Monkwell-street formed one religious society, of which Dr. Fordyce and I were joint ministers. He was pastor and afternoon preacher, and I was morning preacher, being at the time I was chosen, and afterwards, while my health would permit, pastor of another congregation in this city. I was not appointed morning preacher in Monkwell-street by *Dr. Fordyce*, I was chosen by the *society*, (as ministers of dissenting societies always are) and being chosen by the society, my salary had hitherto been paid out of the *collective subscriptions of the society*; and Dr.

Fordyce had *no right* whatever to RESOLVE that it should be otherwise. His pretension to any such right betrayed either great unacquaintance with the principles of the dissenters, or a determined resolution to oppose them. But even, if he had a right, nothing could justify his not informing me 'till *February* that my salary ceased last *Christmas*.

A day or two before the above letter was sent, Dr. Fordyce's friends (without summoning the society at large) met at the Queen's Arms tavern, in St. Paul's church-yard, and the scheme of a separate subscription was there laid before them, in a letter (as I am informed) from Dr. Fordyce, communicated by Mr. Kennedy. His friends approved of it; and immediately agreed, that, for the future, they would not subscribe to Dr. Fordyce *and me*; but to Dr. Fordyce ONLY. By this proceeding they, in fact, separated from me, and from that part of the society whom they considered as my friends. They separated from *them*, by meeting without their knowledge and *decisively* determining things, concerning which they had a right to be consulted, if they were to be considered as belonging to the same society. And they separated from *me*, by resolving to contribute nothing to my support. And, it seems, from the letter just recited, that Dr. Fordyce considered himself, from that time, as their *sole* minister.\* —Dr.

\* It is observable, that he does not speak of himself as *one* of their ministers, but as their *minister*.

Fordyce and his friends, by thus taking upon them to act separately and unconnectedly with me and my friends, and refusing to give them any reason \* for their proceedings, at once destroyed the union of the society, and began a separation.

About three weeks after this meeting, Dr. Fordyce and his friends seemed to have discovered that they had acted too precipitately in *dividing* the society; and that it would have answered his purpose better, if, for the present, the society had continued united, and his resolution for a separate subscription had

\* My Friend wrote to Mr. Kennedy, in answer to his letter which contained Dr. Fordyce's resolution, as follows :

“ SIR,

“ Yours of the 3d instant I received, and have communicated its contents to several of the society of Monkwell-street. The resolution it contains appears a very extraordinary one. They would be glad to be more particularly informed of the meaning of it, and what are the reasons upon which it is founded.

“ Feb. 8, 1775.

I am, &c.”

To which Mr. Kennedy, the next week, replied,

“ SIR,

“ I received yours of the 8th instant acknowledging the receipt of mine of the 3d, which I observe you communicated to several of the society of Monkwell-street, but you do not say that you informed Mr. Toller of the contents according to request. The resolution, I apprehend, explains itself: As for the reasons on which it is founded, they will, if necessary, be stated at a proper opportunity. With true respect,

“ Feb. 13, 1775.

I am, &c.”

Mr. Kennedy was afterwards called upon, by two gentlemen, for the reasons of the above resolution; and he then likewise declined giving any.

been



## S U B S E Q U E N T

been the resolution of the society. But though this discovery was made too late; (for they had *already* divided the society, they had *already* pursued measures inconsistent with the idea of its union,) yet, if possible, to rectify the error, Mr. Kennedy summoned Dr. Fordyce's friends and mine to meet at Monkwell-street, on February the 21st. At that meeting he read a letter from Dr. Fordyce, expressing his *wish* to have a separate subscription. Dr. Fordyce first *resolved*, and *sent* his resolution to me, and then expressed his *wish* that it *might* be a resolution. The inconsistency of this conduct is hardly to be accounted for, unless he first intended to divide the society, and, when it was divided, thought it more for his interest that it should be undivided. This after-application to my friends and his collectively, to do what he, with the approbation of his friends, had already done, amounted to an acknowledgment that his resolution, in the united state of the society, was invalid and nugatory; for had it been deemed valid, why apply to the society at all? — Dr. Fordyce's resolution, in compliance with his request, was adopted at that meeting, by the vote of his friends.

But, supposing Dr. Fordyce and his friends had not begun this separation, and the society had been in its former united state, let me appeal to every candid mind whether, even then, a resolution, in which I was so immediately interested, should have been formed and adopted without first *mentioning* it to me, and hearing my sentiments concerning it, that, if I  
had

had approved, I might have expressed my approbation; or if I had not approved, might have assigned my reasons for my disapprobation. — Or should a measure have been *suddenly* taken, which at once changed the constitution of the society? Ought not such a measure to have been considered, and re-considered with sober deliberation, and discussed with calmness and temper? Ought not its conveniencies and inconveniencies to have been impartially weighed, and the measure adopted or rejected, as either of these should be found to preponderate?

That it is the custom of some societies to have separate subscriptions where there are two ministers, is undoubted. But though there are a few instances of separate subscriptions, yet this mode was fixed on when the ministers first came together, and it had the sanction of their mutual consent. But in all the annals of the dissenters, I believe no instance can be produced of this mode being adopted (after the ministers had been connected with the society for years upon a different plan) by the *peremptory resolution*, or at the request, of *one* of the ministers, without the consent, or even knowledge of the other.

The design of a separate subscription, in those few societies where it obtains, is, that, as the subscribers may be of different opinions respecting the *share* of the subscriptions which each minister ought to receive, individuals may contribute to each in such *proportion* as they judge proper. The design is not, that some may contribute *wholly* to the one, and others to the other;

other, which would be making two distinct societies : yet Dr. Fordyce's friends met and agreed to contribute *nothing* to me, the morning preacher in Monkwell-street ; by which, in reality, they took upon them entirely to alter the plan of the society in that place, which was formed for the support of public worship there in the *morning*, as well as in the afternoon. — Besides, where there is a separate subscription, it is the practice, as well as the province, of the *society* to take care that subscriptions be collected for both their ministers. But when it was voted that there should be a separate subscription at Monkwell-street, no person whatever was appointed either to apply for, or to collect any subscriptions for me. I was totally disregarded by those who carried the resolution. And yet those very persons, who were so entirely regardless of me, would fain have had the controul of my conduct ; to expect which, was “ neither “ very modest, nor very just.”

I know not for what reason, I was to be totally overlooked in a matter which so nearly concerned me, I know not what I had done to excite the resentment, or to forfeit the regards of any. I addressed myself to Dr. Fordyce's friends, when they were met for my expulsion, in the following words : “ As to “ any insinuations which may have been thrown out “ respecting me, of covert designs and malignant influence, (and whether there have been such insinuations you know best) but if there have been “ any such, I now declare, that they are utterly “ ground-



“ groundless; that they are either the creatures of a  
 “ suspicious imagination, or that they have been  
 “ propagated on purpose to mislead.—To guard  
 “ against secret insinuations is impossible. They  
 “ wound like the concealed dagger of an assassin.  
 “ If any one hath any crime to lay to my charge,  
 “ let him speak out. This will be generous and  
 “ manly. And I will either acknowledge the justice  
 “ of the charge, or vindicate my character.”

As Dr. Fordyce had resolved that I should receive nothing from the society;\* as his friends had adopted that resolution; and had likewise resolved that I should receive nothing from them individually; my friends, by whose contributions only I was to be supported in the exercise of my ministry, reasonably expected, that I should perform such ministerial services as they should desire. And some of them desiring me to administer to them the Lord's Supper, (being determined to join no more in that solemnity with Dr. Fordyce) I gave notice on the last Lord's Day in February, that it was my intention, at the request of some very respectable friends, to administer the Lord's supper the next Sabbath in the morning, and so continue (God willing) on the first Sabbath in every month.

This appeared to me a proper, and a necessary measure,—It was *proper* that I should perform this service at the request of those with whom I was connected, uncontroled by those with whom I had now no connection.—While I was morning preacher to

\* I do not mean, that Dr. Fordyce had resolved that I should receive nothing from the individuals of the society; but that I should receive nothing from the society as a society.

the society in Monkwell street, and, as such, supported by them, I should have been justly reprehensible, had I stepped out of my own department into that of Dr. Fordyce, to administer the Lord's Supper without his or their consent. — But Dr. Fordyce had resolved (as before appears) that I should have no support from the society; his friends had adopted that resolution, and had likewise resolved that I should receive nothing from them as individuals. — What dependance, therefore, after these resolutions, had I upon the *society*, or upon these individuals; or what connection with them? And what right had they to *dictate* what services I should, or should not perform to those with whom I was connected, and upon whom I depended? Nothing could be more unreasonable, than first to throw me upon the support of my friends, and then to prevent my doing what my friends requested me to do.

But my administering the Lord's Supper was not only proper, but *necessary*. In the situation into which I was brought by Dr. Fordyce and his friends, it would have been impossible that I should have been long supported in the exercise of my ministry without it. If I had not administered the Lord's Supper to those of my friends who participate of that ordinance, they must have joined themselves in a closer connection with another minister, and I could have expected only an inferior share of their contributions; which would have been insufficient for the subsistence of myself and family. — Or if, out of personal regard to me, or from a generous sense of my being an injured man, they should have contributed more liberal

berally than I could have expected when they were more nearly connected with another minister; yet as they dropped off (several of whom are far advanced in life) what prospect would there have been of having others to succeed them? Who would have come to Monkwell street to settle under my ministry, when I could not administer to them the peculiar ordinance of the Christian religion, however earnestly they might wish it? Had I not, with the concurrence, and at the desire of my friends, determined to administer the Lord's Supper, I must, in a few years, have been brought to that state, to which it was the natural tendency of the conduct of Dr. Fordyce and his friends, not to say their *intention*, to reduce me.\*

\* I can hardly conceive that any one, putting himself into my situation, can think I acted wrong in giving notice of my purpose to administer the Lord's Supper. But supposing I acted wrong, ought not Dr. Fordyce, or some of his friends (instead of pushing on my expulsion) to have conversed with me on the subject, and endeavoured to convince me of my error? "A supposed error on my part, could not, I apprehend, supercede on theirs the duty of complying with an express and important law of charity, enforced by no less an authority, than that of their Divine Master."† I adopted the measure, because I thought it a *right* measure, and that I was justified in pursuing it upon every principle of reason, and of scripture. Had I been convinced that it was *otherwise*, it should have been relinquished. I had not as yet administered: I had only given notice of my *intention* to administer. And, instead of expelling me for my *intention*, would not Dr. Fordyce and his friends, had they been actuated by the spirit, and guided by the Rules of the Gospel, have first endeavoured to convince me by sober argument, that I *ought not* to administer?

† Letter III. p. 24.



When I had received Dr. Fordyce's resolution about a separate subscription, I conversed with many persons upon the subject of my administering the Lord's Supper; and the necessity of it, in my circumstances, appeared to *them* in as strong a light as it appeared to me. And when one or two of my friends met Mr. Kennedy, at his desire, previous to the meeting at Monkwell-street to confirm Dr. Fordyce's resolution, he was then told, that it was my determination, if the intended separation of the subscription took place, to administer the Lord's Supper; and that my friends would contribute, in the proportion they had already contributed, towards the rent of the meeting-house, and other expences.—That evening Dr. Fordyce's resolution being confirmed, it was agreed, that monies subscribed for the rent, &c. should be applied as usual. But at that meeting Mr. Kennedy made no objection to my administering the Lord's Supper; though he knew it was my intention: he did not even mention it; and yet, if he had thought proper to object, *this* should have been the time of his objecting.

The afternoon of the day on which I gave public notice of my intention to administer the Lord's Supper, a paper was read by the clerk, desiring all the subscribers to meet on the Tuesday following, and a circular letter was sent to the same purpose, to the members and subscribers on the Monday. It was reported that the design of the meeting was to expel me. My friends therefore, on the Monday evening pressed  
me

me to attend, judging my attendance proper, as the design of the meeting so nearly concerned me. To which I consented. And it was agreed, that Dr. Fordyce should be informed, on the Tuesday morning, of my purpose to be present in the evening to give him the opportunity of meeting me, if he had been so inclined: and he was informed accordingly. (He desired, in return, that I might be informed that he should not attend, and that it was very improper for me to attend. But as no reasons were offered to convince my judgment, I still held my resolution.—Mr. Marston seeing me at the meeting on the Tuesday evening, enquired if Dr. Fordyce would be there: being answered in the negative by Mr. Kennedy, he immediately made a motion, that the Rev. Mr. Toller be *desired* to withdraw. I objected to this motion, observing, that Dr. Fordyce might have been there if he had chosen; that he had been made acquainted with my intention in the morning; and that I had a right to be heard, and must insist on being heard. However, Dr. Fordyce's friends expressed great eagerness for my withdrawing; and the question that I be *desired* to withdraw being put, it was carried. The vote for *desiring* me to withdraw was then read. I refused to comply with that *desire*, mentioning my reasons. And it was the earnest request of many present that I would *not* comply with it.

I shall take but little notice of Mr. Kennedy's indecent behaviour upon my refusing to withdraw. Such behaviour could hardly have been expected

pected from one who had been held up to view, as "a man, of known, approved, and irreproachable integrity, and who reflects an honour on a Christian society."\* After offering me an illiberal insult, he said that he should proceed to business, and consider me as not present. He then observed, that though Dr. Fordyce was not present in *person*, he was present by *letter*; for he had received a letter from him, which Dr. Fordyce desired might be read to the society.—Let the candid reader judge what were Dr. Fordyce's motives for giving a positive opinion against the propriety of my attending the meeting that evening, when he had written a letter to be

\* Letter III. p. 22.—Mr. Kennedy's behaviour that evening did not reflect much honour either upon the society, or upon himself. It did not then appear, that the picture which Dr. Fordyce drew for his prudent friend bore any striking resemblance of the original.—When Mr. Kennedy spoke of my intention to administer the Lord's Supper, and of the intention of my friends to join with me in the participation of it, he made use of the following passionate and opprobrious terms, staring around him with all the wildness of insanity. "It is DEVILISH. I say, it is DEVILISH. I am not angry, Gentlemen! If I was angry, I ought to be angry."—His behaviour was really shocking and contemptible.

The reader will, I hope, excuse my so frequently mentioning, in the course of this narrative, the name of Mr. Kennedy. But it cannot well be avoided, as Dr. Fordyce has *made* him, though of so little personal importance, a man of *some* consequence by employing him as an agent in these transactions.



*then* read; and what were the motives of his friends in voting (before I had heard the letter) that I should be desired to withdraw.

In the letter, Dr. Fordyce offered to perform the morning as well as the afternoon service at Monkwell-street; said, that he would have no connection whatever, with me; and that, if I was not *dismissed*, he himself would resign.\*

When Mr. Kennedy had read the letter, he made a long motion (which had been already prepared) the purport of which was, that the Rev. Mr. Toller be dismissed. — I then rose to speak; but was prevented, particularly by Mr. Marston and Mr. Kennedy. The injustice and inhumanity of hindering a man from speaking in his own vindication, and of condemning him unheard, were strongly urged by

\* Dr. Fordyce in his letter asserted, that I had expressed dissatisfaction with the part of the subscription which I had received. To this I answer, that I *never* expressed any dissatisfaction with what I had for years received, either to *him*, or to the *society*, or to *any individual*. — The year in which Mr. Alexander Fordyce failed, Mr. Kennedy took upon him to withhold from me twenty pounds. As I thought this (for various reasons which might be assigned) very unjustifiable, I assured him, that I would by no means consent to any such deduction. And mentioning the affair to several gentlemen of the congregation, they interfered in it; and, in consequence of their interference, I received, after that year, the usual sum. — From that time to this, I have expressed no dissatisfaction with what I received. I declared this at the late meeting in Monkwell street, and challenged any one to contradict me. No one did contradict me, not even Mr. Kennedy. What foundation then had Dr. Fordyce for this assertion?

some

some of my friends. — Mr. Marston then asked, whether, if I was permitted to speak, I would confine myself to some particular articles. I enquired what could be the reason of such an opposition to my speaking in my own defence? Or what could be the meaning of all that extraordinary caution, that, if I did speak, I should be *confined* to particular points. I asked whether they were afraid, that I should bring to light some truths which they wished to be concealed, and which might give some persons present, different ideas from those with which they had been prepossessed. I added, that I hoped, I should not in any thing I might say, forget my character as a gentleman, or as a minister. If I did, I wished to be called to order. At length I was permitted to speak; though I was not to stay to *debate* upon the question. — While I was speaking, Mr. Marston sneered, muttered, spoke loud and interrupted me.

I stated the grounds of the misunderstanding between Dr. Fordyce and myself; related the steps which I had taken, and the Overtures I had made, to restore peace and harmony; pointed out, (as in some of the preceding pages) the inconsistency of Dr. Fordyce's resolution about a separate subscription, with the principles of the dissenters; the impropriety of the society's adopting the resolution without my consent or knowledge; and that, in consequence of my being thrown entirely upon the support of my friends in the exercise of my ministry, I considered myself as *responsible* to them *only*; that  
I did

I did not give notice of my intention to administer the Lord's Supper in *opposition* to Dr. Fordyce; that I wished him quietly and unmolested to perform every part of his ministerial and pastoral duty to those who chose to be connected with him. But since Dr. Fordyce and his friends had thought proper to separate themselves from me and my friends; and since, at his desire, and through his influence, I had been thrown off from my dependance upon the society, all I wished, was to do what would be most acceptable to those upon whom I was dependant.\*

But admitting, for a moment, that I was amenable for my conduct in my ministerial character, to a society, or to individuals, who had withdrawn from me their support; yet, even upon this ground, my expulsion could not be vindicated.† Upon this supposition I pointed out the injustice and cruelty of the measure they were pursuing, in the following words:

“ A dissenting society have, beyond all doubt, a  
 “ legal right to exclude any minister from minister-  
 “ ing among them, be his character ever so fair and  
 “ exemplary: that is, they have a right or power  
 “ uncontrouled by the laws of the land, of which  
 “ no one ought to deprive them; but not a right

\* As Dr. Fordyce thought (what I never thought) that I was reaping the fruit of his labours, and chose to be no longer connected with me; we might have assembled in Monkwell-street with our respective friends, the one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon; and in this way have agreed to differ. This would not have been erecting altar against altar; but amicably promoting the same important design.

† What follows in this narrative is on *supposition* that Dr. Fordyce and his friends had *not* separated the society, to show that in *every view* their treatment of me was unjustifiable.

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“ by the law of conscience. When a christian so-  
 “ ciety choose a minister, and he accepts of their  
 “ invitation, there is an implied compact, that  
 “ while he preserves an upright character, and is  
 “ disposed and capable to discharge the duties of  
 “ his office, he shall continue to minister amongst  
 “ them. This is always implied, unless a determi-  
 “ nate time is agreed upon at the election and accep-  
 “ tance. And dissenting societies consider themselves  
 “ as bound in honour and in conscience by this im-  
 “ plied compact. A dissenting congregation would  
 “ forfeit its reputation, and incur lasting disgrace  
 “ and infamy, were they wantonly or passionately to  
 “ expel a minister, who had not become obnoxious  
 “ to them in his religious principles, nor had for-  
 “ feited his moral character. — Who would de-  
 “ vote himself to the ministerial function among  
 “ the dissenters; or who would educate his children  
 “ for that service, if he were thus liable (in spite  
 “ of all his circumspection and care) to be at once  
 “ dismissed, through malice, pride, or avarice; and  
 “ if this implied compact were not his security?  
 “ As, therefore, it was moved to eject me from being  
 “ a minister in this place, where I have been morning  
 “ preacher for upwards of fourteen years, I do now  
 “ call upon any one to shew, wherein I have erred in  
 “ principle, or in practice, so as to deserve such seve-  
 “ rity of treatment. I have a right to ask, what my  
 “ crimes are; and justice and honesty require that  
 “ you give me an open and explicit answer. — I ask  
 “ no

“ no favour. Tis justice only that I demand.—To  
“ expel a minister of the gospel from the society where  
“ he hath ministered, is the greatest punishment that  
“ the society can inflict, and carries with it an im-  
“ plication of something highly criminal. It will  
“ carry this implication in respect to *me* more strongly  
“ than it would in respect to another : for my ex-  
“ pulsion from hence, will be an expulsion not only  
“ from a place where for fourteen years I have exer-  
“ cised my ministry ; but also from a place where  
“ the tenderest and dearest connection I have in the  
“ world hath attended from her infancy ; where her  
“ venerable father (the late excellent Dr. Lawrence)  
“ laboured in the service of the gospel, through a  
“ long course of years, to the close of life, and to  
“ whose countenance and recommendation Dr. For-  
“ dyce owes his being a minister in this city, and in  
“ this place, after having met with repeated disap-  
“ pointments elsewhere,—Were that saint in glory to  
“ be a witness of the divisions which have lately  
“ sprung up here, and of the treatment his family  
“ have received, from those from whom better treat-  
“ ment might have been expected, it would, I was  
“ going to say, disturb the repose, and interrupt the  
“ delight of Heaven.—My expulsion from a place  
“ with which I am thus connected, must imply that  
“ I have done something exceeding criminal. I there-  
“ fore *again* call upon my worst enemies to say *what*  
“ I have done to justify such violent and outrageous  
“ proceeding. If I can be charged with any thing,  
“ and

“ and the charge supported, that deserves expulsion,  
 “ expel me; expel me without mercy; from you I  
 “ ask for none. But if you expel me without cause,  
 “ (and if you do expel me it will be without cause)  
 “ the guilt and infamy of the proceeding will fall  
 “ heavily upon its authors. It must needs be, said  
 “ our Blessed Saviour, that offences come, but wo to  
 “ that man by whom the offence cometh. The great  
 “ Head of the Church is not indifferent to the inju-  
 “ ries done to his ministering servants. Your pro-  
 “ ceedings this day will hereafter be re-examined at  
 “ His awful tribunal; and if you injure me here,  
 “ to his tribunal I appeal.”

When I had said what I thought proper on the oc-  
 casion, as no one rose up to lay any thing to my  
 charge, and as I was not to stay to debate upon the  
 question, I withdrew; and the next day received the  
 following resolution:

February 28, 1775, Meeting-house in Monkwell-  
 street. At a meeting of the members and subscribers  
 summoned by public notice,

*Resolved* That the Chairman do transmit to the  
 Rev. Mr. Thomas Toller the resolution of this meet-  
 ing taken by Ballot viz. That the society has no fur-  
 ther occasion for his assistance—and that they have  
 accepted the offer made by the Rev. Dr. James For-  
 dyce to perform the service of the whole day—in  
 future. And that they expect him accordingly to  
 preach here next Lord's Day in the morning.

William Holland, Chairman.

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It will, I presume, be thought, by the cool and dispassionate, that a business of so important and serious a nature should not have been conducted with so much precipitation. In civil or commercial societies it is not usual, I apprehend, to proceed to ballot, upon any important question, the very day on which it was first laid before them; and without specifying, in the notice or summons, the precise business to be transacted. Nor do I imagine it usual, suddenly, and without warning, to turn a man out of a place, which he hath for years occupied with some degree of reputation, unless he has been found to be guilty of a very flagrant crime. Had I been guilty of the most flagrant crime, I could not have met with stronger marks of eager resentment. Indeed, the rapidity of the proceeding proves, that its abettors were conscious that it would not admit of deliberate discussion.\*

It deserves remark, that no other reason appears in the preceding resolution for expelling me, but that Dr. Fordyce had offered to perform the service of the whole day.—It is not common for dissenting ministers to *offer* their service to dissenting societies. The application is ordinarily from the society to the minister. But Dr. Fordyce *applied* to be morning preacher at Monkwell-street. He applied when there

\* A gentleman, speaking upon the subject to a zealous promoter of the expulsion, was told by him that there was no need for me to have said so much on the occasion, as the affair was fully settled before the meeting.

was no *vacancy*. And he applied that the possessor might be *turned out* to make *him* room !

I am informed, that on the late occasion, among Dr. Fordyce's friends, men and their wives voted, and, in some instances, others of their families. Among my friends there was no instance of this kind. And there were others who voted, who could not be considered as having an *equitable* right. For surely persons belonging to other societies cannot be justified, upon the principles of the dissenters, in coming to Monkwell-street, where they seldom or never *attended*, to vote for the *expulsion* of one of the ministers, because they subscribed something from personal attachment to the *other*. And it was very pertinently observed by a gentleman, on the occasion, that (though he was a constant attendant at that place, both morning and afternoon) there were many then present whose faces were unknown to him ; and that he thought it unfair, that those who did not, and, from their connection with other societies, could not attend, should deprive those who did of the minister they approved.

To exclude me from Monkwell-street appears to have been an object for some time in contemplation. The first plan, it seems, was to provoke me by ill treatment to resign. I saw the drift of the ill usage I met with, and determined that it should not have the desired effect. I expressed that sense of the injuries I had received, which I thought became me ; but would not be provoked by them to relinquish.—This  
scheme

scheme failing, it was resolved, that there should be a separate subscription, which, it was supposed, would, by a short, if not by an immediate operation, accomplish the intended purpose. But when it was found that I had more friends than were expected, and that my administering to them the Lord's supper (which, for the reasons before assigned, I had a right to do, and was under a necessity of doing) would probably defeat the intention of a separate subscription, it was at once resolved, that I should no longer perform any ministerial service in Monkwell-street.\* And a number of persons, whose minds had been artfully raised, by injurious insinuations, to a high pitch of resentment against me, were hastily called together, to vote for my immediate expulsion.

The contrivers of this unrighteous scheme have undoubtedly greater guilt than the mere instruments of its accomplishment; though these are not wholly free. These were culpable in being so far the dupes

\* Though Mr. Kennedy knew that it was my design to administer the Lord's Supper, (see p. 72) yet, a day or two before I gave public notice of it, he desired a friend of mine to ask me, whether I intended to give the notice on the next Sabbath, intimating, with a menacing air, that if I did I must take the consequence. Having then no connection with Mr. Kennedy, nor wishing to have any, and it being an affair in which he had no concern, I might very properly have declined returning any answer. However, I thought it sufficient to return this general one, That I should do what appeared most eligible to my friends, and to myself.—Mr. Kennedy was mistaken if he thought that I should be deterred, by his menaces, from pursuing what I apprehended the line of duty.



of the designing, as to be prevailed on to act repugnant to the plainest principles of religion, and to the most obvious maxims of justice, and of humanity. Their having been seduced into an attempt to distress the family, to ruin the character, and to put a period to the labours of a minister of the Gospel (by suddenly expelling him from the place with which he had been for years connected, and connected by more than ordinary ties) from whom they never received any personal incivility, and on whose religious principles, or moral conduct, there was no charge, or even suspicion, will not, it is presumed, afford them any pleasing reflections in a serious hour.

Dr. Fordyce, since my expulsion from Monkwell-street, hath represented me as possessed of an *affluent* fortune; with what views he himself knows best. Such a representation undoubtedly tends to prevent persons contributing to my support, who might otherwise be disposed to assist a man with a *numerous* family, ejected from his station, without so much as the pretence of any crime. I know not what *authority* Dr. Fordyce had for his assertion. I am sure he had no authority from *me*. A man ought to have clear evidence of the truth of what he asserts manifestly to the prejudice of another. But Dr. Fordyce hath asserted, in this instance, that which he knew not, and which he had no possibility of knowing.\*

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\* I thank God, the worldly advantage I derive from my profession is not the only source of my support: that has always been very inadequate to the expences of my family. Nor shall I regret

It is a source of great consolation, that there is a wise and righteous Providence presiding over the concerns of men. The interpositions of that Providence have remarkably appeared in the issue of the transactions which have now been related. As for those who without cause were my enemies, they thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good. I feel myself much happier in my present situation than in my former: and have a fair prospect of increasing usefulness and comfort.—The large number of respectable persons and families now united under my ministry, who were lately (and some of their venerable ancestors long since) the ornament of the society in Monkwell-street, reflect upon me that distinguished honour, and excite in me that heart-felt pleasure, which I cannot find

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that it continues so, while the income of my private fortune is able to make up the deficiency. I never did, and hope I never shall, preach the Gospel for filthy lucre sake. I feel myself animated by nobler motives than those of worldly gain. I wish, indeed, to live in that credit in which I have hitherto lived; and to be able to answer the growing expence of my children's education. But it must be a larger fortune than mine the interest of which alone will be adequate to these purposes. But if I possessed a fortune truly affluent, would this justify or excuse the ejecting me from my station, and at once depriving me of its temporal benefit? Is this fit treatment for a man who has sacrificed fairer worldly prospects, that he might devote himself to a profession, for the spiritual improvement of others, which has not afforded him even a maintenance? Will not every friend of religion in general, and of the cause of the Dissenters in particular, look upon such treatment with abhorrence?

language to express. The esteem of the worthy it was ever my ambition to acquire; and shall ever be my ambition to preserve. Gratitude and affection to such tried and steady friends, as well as a sense of duty, will animate me to exert my utmost endeavours (in dependance on that influence without which all endeavours are vain) to assist them in their farther preparation for future glory.

T. T.

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